

**Testimony for Public Hearing
House Committee on Health Care
HB 2522- Health Care for COFA Islanders Residing in Oregon
Date: Monday February 9, 2015 Time: 1:00 p.m.**

Good afternoon committee members. My name is Mike Borong from the island of Kapingamarangi, Pohnpei Federated of Micronesia. I currently live in Salem and I've lived in Oregon for 29 years & 5 months (since Sept. 1985). I will read a testimony from Virgil Sigrah who is not able to be present due to his medical appointment this afternoon.

**Name: Virgil Sigrah
DOB: February 8, 1959
Current address: 1120 Colonial Ave NE, Salem OR 97301
Country of citizen: Federated State of Micronesia state of Kosrae
Length of stay in Oregon: 37 years (since 1978)**

I am writing in support for HB 2522- Health Care for COFA Islanders Residing in Oregon and to share my personal experience of health care services and benefits received from the Medicaid health program.

On January 24, 2014, I was admitted and hospitalized at the Salem Hospital intensive care unit due to my serious health condition for 7 days. During my hospital stay, a family member helped me complete an application for Medicaid as I was incapacitated and did not have medical insurance. My Medicaid application was denied due to an error on my application. After several attempts of making the appropriate correction on my application and 9 months of waiting (until Oct. 2014), I received my medical health insurance letter with a coverage date effective October 2014. This means that Medicaid did not retro cover my hospital medical bill of \$80,000.

I contacted Oregon Health Plan (OHP) and inquired about the effective date of my health care cover and was told that my benefits will not cover retro to the date of my hospital stay. I contacted Salem Hospital regarding a payment arrangement and financial assistance. Salem Hospital waived my large medical bill due to my financial hardship which I am forever grateful for.

I have seen a neurologist 3 times for follow ups since my hospitalization. Although these medical visits/services are needed in order to help control and stabilize my chronic health conditions, they are not covered under my current health benefit plan with Citizens Alien Waived Emergent Medical (CAWEM) program. I am making payment arrangements with my neurologist with the limited financial help I receive from family and friends.

I am still unemployed due to my serious health condition and am in the process of applying for disability through the social security administration. Thank you for your valuable time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Virgil Sigrah